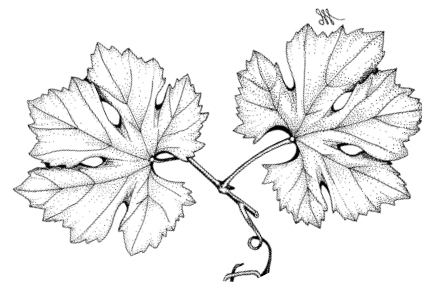


# ZAP/UCD Heritage Vineyard News

## *Crushing Our Heritage*



Although diminutive in size, The Heritage Vineyard packs a mean punch when it comes to stockpiling the crucial essence of Zinfandel in one location – the vines themselves. Located within the larger vineyards belonging to the Oakville Research Station of the University of California, Davis, The Heritage Vineyard is a collection of rare and/or renowned Zinfandel vine selections from all over California, and will soon include samples from the Northwestern United States as well. Budwood (fruiting wood) from selected vines was solicited, accumulated and then grafted on to St. George rootstock already established at the Research Station on "our little 3/4 acre." St. George rootstock is a traditional, long-lived rootstock for Zinfandel, and tolerates feeding by that pesky pest Phylloxera very well. For the initiated, The Heritage Vineyard stats look like this:

- .76 acre
- Bale clay loam soils
- 63 selections with 456 vines currently planted
- 7 vines of each selection
- 9' x 8' spacing
- each vine is head trained and spur pruned in the traditional "goblet" form

The Vineyard is of tremendous historical and viticultural interest to those fascinated by Zinfandel, whether consumers or wine industry professionals. It is a vibrant, "ongrowing" museum of the grape. For the consumer, the Vineyard is living history and provides an easily accessible demonstration of where Zinfandel is really made – in the vineyard. For the wine industry, the Vineyard has special significance in that it represents a resource for future plantings of Zinfandel and a broad range of selections. Soon, vineyard developers will be able to purchase specific selections of budwood from their chosen Zinfandel vine preserved in The Heritage Vineyard.

### ***Romancing the Zin***

After all the planning and hard work that has gone into making the dream of The Heritage Vineyard come true, for some specially challenged wine industry professionals (read "winemakers"), the real fun begins at harvest. Nils Venge of Saddleback Cellars got the first whack at making the inaugural Heritage Vineyard Zinfandel.

Little Saddleback Cellars is located in Oakville, Napa Valley, too, so when grape sampling started in August, 1997, neither Nils or Jason Benz, Staff Research Associate at the Oakville Research Station and manager of The Heritage Vineyard, had very far to go when discussing the Zinfandel's ripeness and readiness for harvest. Final picking instructions were exchanged on September 7th, and Jason delivered the Heritage Zin in 4' x 4' plastic bins to Saddleback on September 8th at about 11:15 a.m. Mary Pisor, Nils's assistant winemaker, weighed lovelies in at 1.26 tons and what a sight to see—black, ripe, full of flavor and, oh sooo sweet!

While humans are distracted by Zinfandel history in the making, animals have no such compunctions. Saddleback Cellars' tractor hound, Tobie, made hay while the sun shined by jumping into the U.C. Davis pick-up and eating Jason's lunch, sack and all, right off the front seat. All that was left was a Glad bag swirling in the wind, Jason's groan, and Nils's apology.

The grapes were stunning with very even veraison, a rich dark color, no discernible blemishes and very little raisining. The Heritage Zin was crushed right back into the 4' x 4' bins using a small Zambelli destemmer/crusher and inoculated with yeast the following morning. After fermentation was complete in about seven days, the wine was racked twice and, in true Saddleback Cellars style, put into three specially selected new American oak barrels donated by Demptos, Napa Cooperage and Tonnellerie Française [Nadalie].

The 1997 vintage from The Heritage Vineyard is a very intense, opaque, purplish-black with a violet rim. In the nose, it has sweet campfire smoke with a hint of vanilla, rich, jammy blackberries, cloves, ripe, red raspberries, and dried rosemary. The wine has a rich "grapiness" with firm, dusty tannins, sweet raspberry and mulberry, a little more sweet smoke, bright raspberries, black currants and mulberries in the finish.

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### **For the initiated, the more technical harvest statistics:**

HARVEST DATE: 9/8/97

TONNAGE: 1.26

BRIX: 26.3

TA: .765

pH: 3.4

COOPERAGE:

T. Français

[Nadalie]

[American Oak Blend (MO,MN,VA,PA)]

Demptos, Napa [American] [Missouri]

*(all barrels medium toast, toasted heads)*

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So welcome the new child of ZAP: The 1997 Heritage Zinfandel! The finished wine has held true to its antecedents: some of the best Zinfandel vines living has made a beautiful wine we can all be proud of. Nils Venge, along with many other producer members of ZAP and staff of the University of California, Davis, is delighted to have had a hand in making a part of the dream come true. Cheers to many more outstanding vintages from our unique and special bequest to the future—The ZAP Zinfandel Heritage Vineyard.

-- MARY BUCKLES  
PISOR FOR ZAP